



Prof. Govindarajan Padmanaban

Prof. Govindarajan Padmanaban received his BSc (Chemistry) from the Presidency College, Chennai, MSc (Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry) from Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi; and DSc (hc) from BHU. After obtaining PhD (Biochemistry) (1966) from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, he became Assistant Professor (1969), Deputy Director (1993) and also Director (1994-98), IISc. He was a UGC-British Council Exchange Scientist at the St Mary's Hospital Medical School, London (1969-70) and Visiting Scientist, University of Chicago (1973-86). After his retirement (1998) from IISc, he worked there as Emeritus Scientist, Honorary Professor, Distinguished Biotechnologist and NASI-Platinum Jubilee Chair. **Presently, Prof. Padmanaban is the Hon'ble President, The National Academy of Sciences, India.**

Academic and Research Achievements: Prof. Padmanaban was instrumental in ushering in recombinant DNA technology in the country. Working in the area, eukaryotic gene transcription, he studied the role of heme in the transcriptional regulation of cytochrome p-450 genes in rat liver; established the multifunctional regulatory functions of heme in the living cell; studied the heme biosynthetic pathway in different eukaryotic systems and discovered the heme-biosynthetic pathway in the malarial parasite and showed it to be a unique drug target. He showed that curcumin from turmeric has antimalarial activity and embarked on clinical trials to prove the efficacy of curcumin-based combination therapies for malaria. He also guided 45 students for PhD. Prof. Padmanaban has published more than 170 highly cited articles in the journals of international repute.

Other Contributions: Professor Padmanaban worked closely with several government agencies to further the cause of biotechnology in the country. He helped and promoted vaccine industries in the country and supported his colleagues in the development of recombinant hepatitis B vaccine and DNA rabies vaccine. He chaired several committees of the Department of Biotechnology and was part of several

initiatives to promote life science research. He was a member of the WHO group on malaria for three years and served on the INSA Council (1991-92).

Awards and Honours: Professor Padmanaban was recipient of Padma Shri (1991) and Padma Bhushan (2004) from the Government of India, SS Bhatnagar Prize for Science & Technology (1983) and Jawaharlal Nehru Birth Centenary Fellowship of INSA. He was CV Raman Research Professor of INSA (1991-96). He was elected Fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore, The National Academy of Sciences (India), Allahabad, Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi and Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS).

A few quotes about Prof. Padmanaban:

A man of simple tastes, salary was least of his concerns. "Fully immersed in research, I did not think about a job or career," he writes. He could focus on research full time as science 'shielded' him from family commitments with his wife taking care of all domestic matters. In fact, he had not gone to a shop or bank for 30 years. "I did not want to exchange my position as professor in IISc with any other position in the world," he writes adding "I could have become the first director of International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (in New Delhi) or secretary of Department of Biotechnology at some point of time if I had wanted to. I would rather dig the earth than reach the stars", a metaphor that incidentally is the title for his memoir.